

Minutes



Meeting	Union Council
Date	5 th of December 2024
Location	Lecture Theatre 3
Status	For Approval

Chair: Hamza Syed

Attending: Liz Bigalke (Governance and Democracy Coordinator), Beth Plant (Democracy and Representation Coordinator), Magda de Soisons-Page (Democracy and Representation Coordinator), Jumara Stone (Chief Executive Officer)

Voting members present: Megan Agreda, Talitha Bader, Lizzie Bartlett, Cody Butler, Kc Campbell, James Carter, Bianca Chiciudean, Antigone Coates, Nicholas Constantinou, Thomas Cornish, Sophie Cox, Oliver Copley, Isabel Dhillon, Meghana Divana, Nadia Eweiss, Kimon Fryer-Petridis, Paris Fryer-Petridis, Zoe Galgavolgyi, Miles Gibson, Thea Glover, Ella Goodman, Hermione Guymer, Samuel Hoare, Olivia Hunt, Aaron Hurrell, Maddy Jones, Oliver Kaye, Chris Kershaw, Lucas Klimas-Benavidez, Abhiram Kuchibhotla, Maita Kusotera, Sam Newman, Taylor Niblett, Niamh O'Neill, Devin Owen, Amy Patterson, Luis Perera, Isaac Ponnidam, Sam Pyle, Ryan Rodgers, Sapphire Roques, Hester Boorman Ross, Thomas Russell, Zahra Shaker, Matthew Shields, Ben Stannard, Rebekah Temple-Fielder, Bithena Tom, Anisah Tufal, Thomas Waddington, Oscar Welchman, Zak Williams, Dylan Williamson, Amina Yahaya, Kyle Yeoh, Amber Yucebas, Amelia Zabicka

[Quoracy check](#)

Section A - Housekeeping

UC 031 Statements from the Chair

The Chair opened the meeting and asked everyone to fill in the quoracy check.

The Chair also explained that the submitted emergency motion will not be accepted at this meeting as he was promised there will be at least one more Union Council in the new year therefore there is no point of urgency.

UC 032 Approval of minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were not available.

Council decided to vote on November UC and December UC Minutes at the February Meeting.

UC 033 Matters arising

Nothing was brought up.

- UC 034** **Approval of Society and Peer Groups**
All Student Groups were approved.
[Voting stats](#)

Section B - Reports

- UC 035** **Student Officer Committee Report**
No report was submitted.

- UC 036** **Trustee Board Report**
No report was submitted.

- UC 037** **Full-Time Officer Reports**
The Chair explained that he would prefer all Full-Time Officers to present their reports and welcomes them to bring a motion forward for FTOs to only submit written updates.
Chris explained that he is not prepared his update for council and asked everyone to read his officer update and ask questions should they have any.
Olivia apologised for not being prepared for this. She also stressed that verbal reports take up much of the allocated time which can be used for student democracy instead of listening to her read out her written report. Olivia also raised that in the written report she gives a full update which may be pages long which would take a long time to read aloud. She is happy to answer any questions should there be any.
The Chair agrees that there was not enough time for the FTOs to prepare their reports however he requests the Full-Time Officer reports to be given verbally at the next Union Council unless a motion is brought forward.
Oscar asked if these verbal updates are only for the Full-Time Officers or if they include Part-Time Officers too.
The Chair explained that only Full-Time Officers will have to verbally present their report.
Olivia raised that all officers whether they are full-time or part-time are seen equally in student politics so any rules implemented should be the same no matter their position.
The Chair explained that he has been approached by Union representatives requesting verbal updates from Full-Time Officers only. He explained that if a change needs to be implemented, it needs to go through a democratic process.

Chris raised that all Officers are elected by the Union to make such decisions. If everything needs to go through Union Council, what is the point to elect Student Officers as executives with democratic legitimacy to make small procedural changes.

The Chair explained that students are concerned there are changes being made without the democratic procedures being followed hence why this discussion has been brought to this Council. He invites anybody who is in favour of this change to submit a motion to the next Union Council allowing students to vote on the change.

Section C – Open Discussion

UC 038 **Open Discussion Topics: Making Union Council more accessible**

ed that he believes this room not to be wheelchair accessible and exp with hidden disabilities he wants to make sure every student is welcor and open environment.

med that the room is wheelchair accessible.

l whether it is possible to move Union Council to a different room as ir eaker was not able to come to the front due to a disability.

ied that recently they brought an ambulatory wheelchair user to camp l that the route to the Library and Lecture Theatres are not very acces

ed that at DPC it was brought up that in previous years they had resu ly after voting was closed. DPC asked to start this again.

l that seeing live voting may have caused students to change their vo ty, so they believe seeing the results after voting is closed is better sc ote for what they agree with rather than the popularity of the motion.

Section D – Policy Making

UC 039 **Credibility from Day One – Seriousness in Student Union Politics**

Chris explained the motion and opened the floor to any questions.

Question

Forrest asked whether candidates have to attend all 6 suggested training sessions and how would it work if students cannot attend due to timetabling.

Answer

Chris explained that there are 6 available training sessions so people can choose which one to attend.

Question

Forrest asked how the SU would prove candidates are competent and paid attention at the training session. They also asked how the SU would make sure candidates use the allocated money wisely.

Answer

Chris explained that there is no way of proving this but the SU are hoping candidates will do the right thing. He explained that candidates must upload a manifesto before the close of nominations and must attend the mandatory training to be allowed to stand in the elections.

Question

It was asked who would deliver the training whether it's current officers or SU staff.

Answer

Chris explained that it would be wrong for current officers to train potential candidates so the training will be led by SU Staff. He also explained that there is a handover period before new officers begin for the current officer to hand-over to the incoming officer.

Speech Against

Jared exclaimed that he thinks the current officers do not have the right to determine who is or isn't a serious candidate. He believes student can decide themselves whether a swimming pool or second library are worth to be voted for. He also raised his concerns about the mandatory training as he thinks this will lead to the same type of candidate running/being elected. He also believes that the SU should not be allowed to control what format the manifestos have to be or what type of photo should be submitted. He wants the student body to have free voting rights and should not be limited to certain candidates.

Speech For

Chris explained that the training is only about the rules of the elections. He also explained that manifesto points like building a swimming pool or a second library can still be part of ones manifesto as there is nothing stopping candidates to propose this. Chris also explained that the motion is only stopping candidates from not submitting a manifesto at all. There is nothing limiting candidates to submit a manifesto with one sentence.

Speech Against

Jared expressed scepticism about the necessity of six training sessions mentioned by Chris. He argued that since Chris was able to summarize the content in just two minutes, the extended format seems excessive. He believes these sessions may promote a specific type of candidate and suggests that individuals should not feel pressured to conform to certain expectations, such as creating a manifesto. Jared is against the idea of controlling how candidates operate and feel that if the sessions are as straightforward as Chris described, fewer sessions would suffice. He questions whether Chris is misrepresenting the training's depth and stresses the importance of diverse voices in the process. He hinted that he might be more open to a single training session instead.

Speech For

Chris explained that there are six training sessions so that candidates can choose which training session to go to. Oscar shares positive experiences from attending training sessions, finding them very helpful, especially since he was unfamiliar with manifestos while campaigning online during his study abroad. He

believes it would be beneficial for these training sessions to be mandatory and accessible for all candidates. Oscar expresses concern about the unreasonable nature of some manifestos, stating they can mislead students who may not fully understand the capabilities of the student union (SU). He notes that while the motion does not specify what a manifesto must include or require it to be reasonable, attending training could help candidates understand realistic expectations, as Chris mentioned.

Speech Against

Jared agreed with the sentiment expressed by the previous speakers but believes the current motion should be rejected as it is not worded appropriately. He argues that the motion mandates 6 training sessions without specifying that only one is required, does not define the length of the sessions which he sees as problematic, and states that manifestos will be screened for physical and fiscal feasibility, contradicting what Chris and Oscar said about not controlling manifesto content. Jared feels the motion is being misrepresented and does not reflect what the speakers have described, suggesting the motion should be reworked to address his concerns around the number of required sessions, the length, who will run the training, and removing the manifesto screening requirement, at which point he would be more inclined to support it.

Speech Against

Christopher shared his experience from last year's election, noting that many manifestos were simply one or two sentences long. He finds the idea of having the issue screen manifestos for appropriateness to be an overreach, arguing that candidates should be free to submit whatever they want. He points out the impracticality of expecting the union to fulfil outlandish requests, like building a swimming pool, and highlights the difficulty of coordinating between various student committees. Additionally, he raises concerns about the six training sessions planned over four weeks, questioning the time commitment and the funding required to host them. Christopher believes that if one person is tasked with teaching a large group, it will likely turn into a lecture rather than an interactive session, undermining the effectiveness of the training.

Speech For

Rebekah discusses the legal responsibility of the student union and the potential consequences of a fire. She was unaware of this when she ran for the role and was not given a job description until July. She attended training sessions to make students aware of their responsibilities. She also discussed the SEC's efforts to align manifestos and the potential consequences of being listed on Companies House as a director of the Student Union at 21. Rebekah believes the unknown responsibility of full-time roles is scary and that it could be detrimental if not understood.

Speech For

Olivia discussed the potential consequences of a recent incident where she as a 23-year-old could face prison. She emphasized the importance of understanding the three hats of a student union:

officer, employee, and trustee. She also highlighted the need for transparency and the potential for sabbatical officers to run on controversial topics. Olivia also highlighted the need for more training for officers to avoid burnout and disciplinary processes. She also mentioned attending a training session on writing a good manifesto, which she believes is crucial for proper execution. She also highlighted the importance of proper guidance on how to write a manifesto, stating that it is up to the individual to take the process more seriously. Overall, Olivia emphasized the need for transparency and accountability in the student union.

Summation Speech

Chris argued that promises made in his speech are not physically or materially possible, and that the Union should not be expected to fulfil them. He cites the example of a swimming pool on the library roof and the idea of Union House being rented from the university. He believes that electing individuals who make promises that are unrealistic is damaging and that the Union should clarify and codify existing rules.

The Council moved to a vote on a procedural motion

Voting stats

The Council moved to vote on the motion

Voting stats

Council decided to take a 10 min break

Quoracy Check

UC 040

Support the Collaborative Transition to a Sustainable Plant-Based Catering System

Finn and Oscar introduced their motion and opened the floor to any questions.

Question

Ella asked what the final aim is and whether the motion will ensure that new produce brought in is ethically sourced. She also asked if this would affect the campus shop bakery goods.

Answer

Oscar explained that the change would be very gradual as this cannot be changed overnight however the final goal is to be fully plant-based. He also explained that the change is about trying to make sure that work is being done to make sure it's ethically and sustainably sourced whether it's meat or plant based. Lastly, he explained that as the campus shop is separate now they can't make them only serve plant-based goods, but he highly recommends trying plant-based pastries.

Question

It was asked whether there is a deadline or start date for this motion to come into effect and who would be responsible for holding the SU responsible.

Answer

It was explained that they want to start making differences and improving the menu during 2025 and that it's a collaborative project meaning lots of parties are involved including students, staff and externals

Question

It was also asked how this motion can be representative of most students and be in their interest especially seen as most people tend to consume meat or meat products. The student explains they understand that this will likely be pushed through gradually, but they don't see how it's representative of most students of this Union.

Answer

Oscar explained that they acknowledge that most people at university do eat meat and do consume meat products, as does he sometimes. And this isn't about stopping individuals from eating meat. And furthermore, the Union Council is the representative body of students. There should be a member present at Union Council, whether as a student group representative or as an individual, therefore it should be voted for or against according to the represented group. Equally this isn't about pushing everyone to be vegan. This is about supporting a shift towards a transition to plant-based meals on campus.

Question

It was asked what it is that makes this sustainable?

Answer

It was explained that studies show that part-based diets are far more sustainable than meat, meat, dairy, and egg inclusive diets.

Speech Against

Miles brought up that by them attempting to make this inclusive, whereby the nature of this motion you're attempting to exclude non-plant-based diets from UEA catering entirely. And that's just an inherent contradiction. He also mentioned that this is a democratic institution, and he believes one should not use a democratic institution to force people out of their personal choices.

Speech For

Finn explained that inclusivity is about making sure that they account for everybody in the room and everybody at uni. So, everyone with all the various kind of concerns they may have with diet it's not just about whether there's meat on the menu or not. He explained that one of the aims of this motion is to really make sure that they push for that inclusivity, which is the reason why they are speaking the disability societies and neuro diversity societies to make sure that they're not just turning everything to its plant-based alternative, they want to make sure that it's a better version. He explains they want to make them tastier and more inclusive of people that might struggle finding foods on campus due to dietary requirements. Accounting for all these different other inclusivity factors, not just for people who eat meat.

Speech Against

Sapphire argued that many high-protein alternatives, such as tofu, had to be imported, which meant they came with significant emissions, similar to meat-based alternatives. She pointed out that while these plant-based options might not have as high emissions as current meat alternatives, they still weren't a sustainable choice due to the environmental impact of importing them. She suggested that more focus should be placed on promoting sustainable farming practices for animals rather than relying on imported plant-based options. Sapphire criticized the idea that plant-based diets were inherently more sustainable, citing the need to import certain foods and the carbon footprint of air transport.

She also touched on the issue of democracy within the student union, claiming that it did not represent the average student's views, as many students had not been consulted on the policy. She argued that many students preferred the SU to focus on issues like housing, transport, and the cost of living, rather than lobbying for a shift to plant-based diets. She emphasized that, in her view, the broader public did not support the policy, and that the push for sustainable meat farming might be more aligned with what students and people in the UK wanted. Ultimately, Sapphire expressed that the policy detracted from more pressing issues and that she was speaking on behalf of Thomas Cornish and the BBQ society, while also expressing some personal beliefs.

Speech For

Hester began by clarifying that the motion called for a transition to plant-based diets, backed by scientific research showing that plant-based diets produce 84% less CO₂ than their meat equivalents. She emphasized the importance of systemic change and explained that the motion aimed for a collaborative transition, taking everyone's needs and priorities into account. One key proposal was to establish a consultant group, where relevant groups could provide feedback throughout the process. She also highlighted that the transition would be well-documented and inclusive, ensuring all students felt involved.

Hester addressed concerns about whether plant-based diets could accommodate allergies, noting that the motion sought to ensure menus catered to people with allergies, sensory needs, and cultural requirements, including halal options. She emphasized the collaborative and inclusive nature of the approach, which would take place over a long period. She pointed out that other universities, like Cambridge, were already leading the way with fully plant-based options and expressed the desire for UEA not to fall behind.

Speech Against

Rebekah began by addressing concerns about allergies, noting that Campus Kitchen currently doesn't provide allergen specifications, including for their chips, which aren't guaranteed to be gluten-free due to cross-contamination risks. She shared an anecdote about a close friend who had issues with Campus Kitchen's lack of allergen transparency. Rebekah argued that the motion couldn't guarantee that allergens would be properly handled, especially since the current issue of allergen labelling wasn't being addressed adequately.

She then mentioned the university-owned bakery in the SPA, which could control allergen specifications more effectively. Rebekah also raised concerns about the potential negative impact of restricting food choices, particularly for people with eating disorders or sensory issues. She suggested that restricting food could be harmful, regardless of the reasoning behind it.

Additionally, she pointed out confusion around the motion's stance on meat, as it seemed to suggest that meat would be eliminated, but some proponents of the motion had indicated that meat would still be available. She felt there was a lack of clarity in the motion. Ultimately, Rebekah emphasized that restricting food options could be particularly harmful for students dealing with eating disorders, which were common in university settings.

Speech For

Siobhan began by highlighting recent studies showing that plant-based meals are significantly cheaper to produce than meat-based meals in universities, with one study finding plant-based meals to be 30% cheaper and another by Oxford indicating they were a third cheaper. She expressed excitement about the potential for cost savings.

She then addressed concerns about allergies, particularly the issue raised by Rebekah regarding Campus Kitchen not providing allergen specifications. Siobhan clarified that the motion aimed to work with Campus Kitchen on this issue, ensuring that the changes would be collaborative and inclusive, with a focus on broadening options to account for allergies and other dietary needs. She mentioned several meetings with Gavin, the head of catering, who was eager to work on these improvements.

Siobhan reiterated the environmental benefits of plant-based meals, citing the 84% reduction in emissions compared to meat-based meals, and pointed out that plant-based options like tofu produce only 3% of the emissions that beef does,

referencing a 2018 study. She emphasized that the transition to plant-based meals would be gradual, and that meat would no longer be served at Campus Kitchen by the end of the process.

She addressed confusion about whether meat would be entirely eliminated, clarifying that the plan was to stop serving meat at Campus Kitchen, but students with serious allergies could still bring their own food. Siobhan concluded by emphasizing that the goal was to make the transition inclusive, working with partners like Forward Food to ensure the process met the needs of all students.

Speech Against

George argued that the motion's emphasis on inclusivity contradicted the plan to eventually stop serving meat, as it would exclude people who rely on a meat-based diet. He expressed concerns about the sustainability of plant-based farming, mentioning that many of his family members are farmers who wouldn't grow plant-based crops because such farming methods result in the deaths of numerous animals. He pointed out that crops often require eliminating animals to ensure their growth. Ultimately, George felt that the motion's goal of inclusivity didn't align with the proposal to eliminate meat in the future.

Summation speech

Finn responded to the concern about killing animals to grow plants by pointing out that most crops grown on Earth are used to feed animals, highlighting the inefficiency of consuming animals compared to a plant-based system. He emphasized that a shift to plant-based diets would result in a significant reduction in inefficiencies, specifically mentioning a 76% reduction.

He then clarified that the motion was not about abruptly removing meat from the menu, as some had suggested. Instead, he explained that the transition would be gradual and collaborative, ensuring that everyone's needs were considered. Finn reassured the audience that the university wouldn't suddenly eliminate meat but would slowly add more plant-based options over time. He reiterated that the core of the motion was about inclusivity, and the process would involve input from various stakeholders, including health professionals and student groups, to ensure a smooth and well-supported transition. He concluded by encouraging people to engage with the resources and support available to make the transition successful.

Voting stats

UC 041 Gender Identity Fund

Matthew and Thea introduced the motion and opened the floor to any questions.

No questions were asked and no speeches made.

Voting stats

UC 042 To rename the sabbatical role of 'Welfare, Community, and Diversity Officer' to 'Communities and Culture Officer.'

Nathan introduced the motion and opened the floor to any questions.

Question

Ella asked whether this would shift the jobs responsibilities too or if the motion is only to change the role name.

Answer

Olivia explained that the motion would slightly shift the responsibility for welfare matters, such as those related to clubs and societies, directly to her role. She clarified that while this change would be reflected in the written job description, it wouldn't significantly alter her current responsibilities, as welfare issues already came to her. Olivia mentioned that most of her role

would remain the same and emphasized that this change was part of a broader effort to revisit and update officer job descriptions, many of which had been written over 20 years ago. She suggested that this process would follow Union Council and hoped her explanation made sense.

Question

Erin asked in case Olivia cannot make a summation speech if she can explain the culture aspect of the officer role.

Answer

Olivia's speech highlighted the importance of incorporating culture into the role of an officer to reflect the diversity of students on campus. She emphasized that this would help celebrate the unique traditions, perspectives, and identities of students from around the world. The officer's role would be vital in amplifying their voices, ensuring they feel valued and included through initiatives such as cultural festivals and advocacy for underrepresented groups. Olivia explained that culture isn't just about heritage, but also about the dynamics within student groups, including sports teams and societies. The officer would work to foster inclusivity and positivity in these spaces, ensuring they are welcoming and safe for all students. She also noted that the officer would help shape the social culture of the campus, from nightlife to student union events, by promoting safe, enjoyable experiences and advocating for policies that support a vibrant, inclusive student life. Olivia concluded by stressing that incorporating culture into this role would allow the officer to engage with students on personal, collective, and social levels, ensuring that every aspect of the community is considered.

Voting stats

UC 043

Any Other Business

A referendum was mentioned.

Chris explained that for the plant-based university motion to go to a referendum, it would need to be approved by a majority of the Union Council. They also mentioned that the text of the motion is now available and assumed that this would be the version voted on.

It was asked whether the referendum can be discussed in another meeting.

The Chair explained that this is the case.

Guillotine was called.

Guillotine vote

As Guillotine did not reach quoracy, the Chair requested a quoracy check.

Quoracy check

Quoracy was not met, therefore the meeting ended.

UC 044 **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is held on the 6th of February 2025.

The deadline for agenda items to this meeting is 5pm on the 24th of January 2025.